DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 322 020 SO 020 770

AUTHOR Ediger, Marlow
TITLE Living in a Mennonite or a Hutterite Community. (A Suggeted Resource Unit).
PUB DATE 90
NOTE 14p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Ability; Classroom Techniques; Educational Objectives; Elementary Secondary Education; Learning Activities; *Minority Groups; *Religious Cultural Groups; Resource Units; Rural Sociology; Student Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS *Hutterites; *Mennonites

ABSTRACT

Within the United States there are minority groups whose beliefs, values, and customs differ from most citizens. Individuals living in Mennonite and Hutterite communities are members of such minority groups. The unique qualities of Mennonite and Hutterite communities present an opportunity for students to see U.S. society from a different vantage. This document presents a resource unit outline on Mennonite and Hutterite communities. The elements of the unit include understandings, skills, and attitudes to be developed by students; and suggested learning experiences and activities. A 5-item list of resources is included. (DB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED322020

LIVING IN A MENNONITE OR A HUTTERRITE COMMUNITY

(A Suggested Resource Unit)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

MARLOW EDIGER

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

SO 020 770

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

LIVING IN A MENNONITE OR A HUTTERITE COMMUNITY

(A Suggested Resource Unit)

Within the United States there are minority groups whose beliefs, values, and customs differ much from most Americans. Individuals living in a Mennonite or a Hutterite community are such minority groups. Their environment has provided situations whereby what has been learned differs considerably as compared to other citizens in American society.

I. Suggested General Objectives to be Realized by Pupils

More objectives are listed than a given classroom of pupils generally can realize. Careful selection needs to be made of objectives that are attainable for pupils. However, an adequate number of objectives pertaining to understandings needs to be emphasized in order that pupils develop accurate concepts and generalizations rather than partial truths. This unit is delimited to the study of General Conference Mennonites (there are many other Mennonite groups) and Hutterites living in colonies (there are Hutterites who individually own their property). There are cultural differences within General Conference Mennonite communities and also within the different Hutterite colonies.

A. Understandings to be Developed by Pupils

To develop within the pupil an understanding that:

1. Hutterites earn their living through farming, while General Conference Mennonites may earn their living through farming while more and more (a) live on farms and derive most

of their income from working in cities. (b) have moved to cities to gain employment due to scarcity and high cost of farm land. (c) have earned college degrees at various levels and are engaged in the professions if nursing, teaching, medicine, dentistry, the ministry, and business. Little or no interest has existed in the field of law.

2. Each Mennonite farmer owns and/or rents his own land while Hutterites living in a colony own property and farm land cooperatively.

3. Both the Mennonites and Hutterites use the latest in farm equipment such as self-propelled combines, tractors, trucks, milking machines, and equipment for tilling the soil.

4. Nonconformity in dress and appearance for religious reasons is important to the Hutterites such as (a) men wear beards, (b) women wear long dresses and a head covering.

5. Dress and appearance of the Mennonites makes it impossible to distinguish them from other American citizens in general.

6. Hutterite children are educated in their own schools approved by the state department of education located in the colony; they attend school to age sixteen. (a) Much emphasis is placed upon knowing and living by Biblical teachings. Learnings pertaining to the Bible are taught in the German language. These classes are held before and after the regular classes taught in English. (b) Studying evolution and glorifying militarism is frowned upon and forbidden. (c) Fully qualified and licensed teachers meeting state requirements are hired to teach and live in a colony.

7. Mennonite children attend the public schools on the elementary and secondary school levels.

8. Hutterite men and most Mennonite young men of draft age do not participate in military service. To perform draft obligations, Mennonites men, for instance, teach and help distribute food and clothing in underdeveloped areas of the world, or work in hospitals, orphanages, and homes for delinquents in the United States. Men and women of all ages volunteer to work free, abroad in assisting refugees and poor people; as well as in old folks' homes, mental hospitals, farms in low income areas connected with a school, and cleaning up areas where storms have taken place, in the United States.

9. Hutterite baptized men vote on decisions that a colony makes.

10. Hutterites elect a business manager for their colony. An elected work supervisor of the Hutterites has the responsibility of placing workers at tasks they can do best in the colony. Two or three trustees serve as judges when disputes arise between or among members within a colony.

11. The homes of the Mennonites contain all of the conveniences that most modern homes have. Generally, four Hutterite families live in a large house with modern facilities for each family; adults eat their meals in a dining hall separate from children attending school (the dining hall is a separate building from the home).

12. Hutterites butcher their own farm animals for a supply of meat, can their own fruits and vegetables, and bake bread, pies, and other foods in their bakery, as well as largely make their own clothing including men's suits; they are very self-sufficient in a colony.

13. Mennonites buy their clothing commercially except for some women who like to make some of their own dresses. Butchering farm animals for a supply of meat and the baking of bread on the farm is generally a lost art. Most food items are purchased from a supermarket regardless of the family living on a farm or in an urban area.

14. Both Mennonites and Hutterites do not believe in the taking of oaths (affirming rather than swearing is the rule). Suing other individuals is frowned upon

B. Skills to Be Developed By Pupils

To develop skill within pupils to:

1. Listen carefully to ideas presented in a group or committee setting.

2. Utilize new concepts and terms effectively when communicating ideas.

3. Read materials critically, creatively, and with meaning.

4. Find needed information by utilizing encyclopedias.

5. Utilize at an improved level the mechanics of writing such as handwriting, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization (ideas or content in writing are more important, however, when compared to the mechanics of writing).

6. Speak effectively and accurately when taking part in large

group or committee work.

7. Respect and objectively consider the ideas presented by other pupils.

8. Read content with a purpose involved.

9. Take notes effectively over content that has been read.

10. outline effectively, using proper form, ideas comprehended from reading.

C. Attitudes to Be Developed By Pupils

To develop an attitude of:

1. Respect towards ideas, values, and beliefs of minority groups.

2. Desiring to think critically pertaining to the ideas of minority groups.

3. Respect toward contributions made by minority groups in American society

4. Wanting to identify and solve problems utilizing the best information possible.

5. Wanting to rethink one's guidelines, standards, or set of values.

6. Desiring to have additional information on the Hutterites and/or the Mennonites

II. Suggested Learning Experiences and Activities

Individual differences within a group of pupils need to be provided for. Thus, a variety in learning activities for pupils is important. A child may learn more from viewing a filmstrip or film as compared to a learning activity involving reading of content. The fast learner who

reads well may realize his optimum through many learning activities involving reading. To develop and maintain pupil interest in a unit, a change of activities is important.

A. Introducing the Unit

Interest is an important factor in facilitating pupil learning. The teacher needs to think in terms of learning activities that would capture the interests of pupils when beginning a unit. "Purpose" also needs to be developed within pupils. Each child needs to feel that a reason (or reasons) exists for studying a unit. Learnings that pupils develop must be meaningful; they should thoroughly understand ideas, terms, concepts, and generalizations in the beginning of the unit as well as later on.

1. The teacher and pupils can develop an interest center by placing model implements on a table, which all pupils can view readily. These models are easy to purchase from an implement store, from a toy store, or from the toy section of a hardware or department store. Many children may have some of these toy implements in their homes and can bring them to school with no expense involved. The teacher may also have these toys in the home. Model farm animals such as sheep, hogs, beef cattle, dairy cattle, and laying hens should also be placed on the interest center.

Pupils should be permitted to play with the toys and ask questions about them in farming operations. Questions that might arise under teacher guidance might be the following (depending on the pupils' background knowledge): (a) What are the names of these

implements and how are they used? (b) How have farm machines changed from earlier times? (c) Why do some farmers raise beef cattle as compared to dairy cattle?

The purpose of the interest center is to help pupils realize that Mennonites and Hutterites use modern farm machinery. They do not use draft horses with horse drawn plows, binders, mowers, and rakes. Questions that pupils raise can be a basis for problem solving activities. The teacher, of course, also needs to ask important questions. After questions have been raised, a variety of methods and approaches can be used to gather information.

2. The teacher can show and discuss with pupils pictures pertaining to Hutterites from the book The Hutterite Way (see special references). This book contains interesting pictures pertaining to the use of modern farm machinery, homes in a colony, children in a school on the colony, and women with their long dresses and unique head covering. Pupils, no doubt, will ask many questions about the Hutterites which lead to the gathering of information in solving problem areas. Questions such as the following may arise:

(a) Why do many Hutterite families live in a colony?

(b) Why do Hutterite women wear long dresses and have a head covering?

(c) What did Hutterite pupils learn in their school as compared to most other children?

3. A bulletin board display can be developed pertaining to pictures of Mennonites. These can be obtained from The Mennonite Weekly (see special references). There may be pictures of General Conference Mennonites pertaining to the following scenes:

(a) farmers engaging in harvesting different crops using modern farm machinery.

(b) adults engaging in "clean-up" work following a storm or tornado. (They receive no pay or salary for this work).

(c) young men performing their draft obligations by performing alternative service.

(d) scenes pertaining to modern homes owned by individual families (as well as older homes, too). Have pupils notice that the dress, appearance, as well as the kind of homes does not differ from other Americans. Questions such as the following can be discussed:

(1) Why don't Mennonite men of draft age go into military service instead of alternate service? See the Sermon in the Mount-Matthew 5-7. These chapters should be discussed from a secular point of view. Objective, open discussion is to be encouraged. Respect toward the thinking of each pupil is important.

(2) Why do many adults work with no pay or salary involved to clean up houses, yards, and streets following a tornado? Bring to the attention of pupils the story of the Good Samaritan. Guide pupils in thinking about this incident from a secular point of view. How would they react to others if they were good samaritans? Have pupils

also think of the dangers involved in being a good Samaritan. Much thought should go into the discussion. This could have tremendous implications for citizenship education.

B. Developing the Unit

The teacher continually needs to provide for individual differences in the classroom. These differences consist of capacity, achievement, interest, background knowledge, and length of attention span. Variety, again, is important when thinking of learning activities to provide for each pupil in the classroom. In developing the unit, the teacher needs to further develop pupil interest in the new unit as well as help pupils realize in depth desirable concepts, facts, and generalizations. Realizing objectives pertaining to skills and attitudes is equally important.

1. From the book The Hutterite Way, the teacher can read to pupils the work of the minister, business manager, work supervisor, and trustees in a Hutterite colony. This is a unique and highly interesting way of providing for various needs in a colony. Pupils should notice cultural differences when studying the Hutterites as compared to other groups within American society. The teacher needs to ask questions as well as encourage pupils to ask questions about the form of government in a Hutterite colony. Answers to the questions should be discussed. Objective thinking as well as respect toward minority groups and toward pupils' contribution in the discussion is very important. Pupils with teacher guidance could discuss Acts 2 in the New Testament which is the basis for Hutterite thinking in having a group own property in common. Critical thinking and respect for the thinking of others is important.

2. Pupils with teacher guidance could make and develop a model Hutterite colony. The model colony would have large houses with four families living in each house. There would be a separate building for the church which is also used as the school building for children. As the model Hutterite colony is developed, pupils will, no doubt, ask many questions and desire to have these questions answered.

3. A separate model scene can be developed pertaining to a Mennonite farm. This farm scene would look like many other American farms. Farm implements from the interest center should become a part of the model farm. Farm buildings can be made or a pupil (or pupils) may bring these from their homes. The teacher needs to utilize the talents of each pupil in developing these model scenes. Pupils need to be actively involved in the various learning activities provided for them. The teacher should stimulate pupils to ask questions and find needed information for the answers.

4. A committee of pupils can develop reports dealing with Mennonite adults and young men in alternative service helping the less fortunate in the United States and abroad. The Mennonite Weekly as well as the Mennonite Encyclopedia (see special references) can assist pupils in getting needed information. Content that pupils read should be discussed objectively and compared with other approaches or ways of thinking in building a strong United States.

5. The Hutterites and the Mennonites believe in utilizing good farming methods. Pupils with teacher direction can look at late issues of The Farm Journal and Successful Farming to notice the latest in farm equipment as well as good farming methods. Pupils should realize that the Mennonites are "caught" in the rural to urban movement as is true of

most farmers in the United States. Better farm machinery makes it necessary to have fewer farmers involved in farming. The Mennonites try to stay on the farm, generally, as long as possible-until farm land and/or income is not adequate. Hutterites are strictly a rural population. Several pupils could volunteer to report on aspects of modern farming utilizing recent farm journals.

6. The teacher can read selected sections on the Hutterites from The Mennonite Encyclopedia to pupils. An objective discussion involving all pupils should follow.

1. Gross, Paul S., The Hutterite Way, Saskatoon, Canada: Freeman Publishing Company Limited, 1965.

Intermediate grade pupils can read many selected parts of this book. Many interesting pictures help the reader to understand the Hutterites better. Appropriate methods of teaching establish readiness within pupils for reading.

2. Then Mennonite Encyclopedia, Hillsboro, Kansas: The Mennonite Brethern Publishing House, 1959.

There are four volumes in this set which contain much information on General conference Mennonites and Hutterites (such information can also be obtained from these volumes pertaining to other Mennonite sects, also). Carefully selected sections pertaining to needed information can generally be read by pupils if proper readiness for reading has been established. The editors of this set of encyclopedias have earned doctorates pertaining to their area of specialty.

3. The Mennonite Weekly Review, Newton, Kansas 67114.

News happenings and pictures of special happenings pertaining to the different sects of Mennonites make up the content of this weekly paper. Selected parts properly introduced can generally be read by pupils on the intermediate grade levels.

4. Wiebe, David V., They Seek A Country, Hillsboro, Kansas: The Mennonite Brethern Publishing Company, 1959.

This book pertains to the history of different Mennonite sects as well as developments of these groups up to the copyright date. Pictures within the context help to clarify ideas.

5. The Mennonite Life, Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas.

This magazine is published four times a year, with some article pertaining to General conference Mennonites and Hutterites. Numerous pictures help to make the contents of the magazine interesting and meaningful. The contents of the magazine, carefully selected and introduced, can be read by many intermediate grade pupils.